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ABSTRACT

The position of school principal has become unattractive; consequently, fewer qualified applicants are appearing to fill vacancies. To recruit new principals and retain veteran principals, a new model of the principalship is needed. This paper reviews research on factors that influence applicants and presents a brief overview of efforts to redesign the principalship. The research shows the main reason people are not applying for principal positions is the overwhelming workload required of the position. Additionally, people react differently to features of the position. Features that appeal to males may not appeal to females; features that appeal to elementary- and middle-school teachers may not appeal to high-school teachers; features that appeal to aspiring principals may not appeal to veteran principals. Most emerging models of the principalship cited from the research propose dividing the principal's duties into components performed by two or more individuals. To increase the applicant pool, the paper recommends the following: (1) consult studies examining the interaction between job features and applicant characteristics and modify the job in ways to appeal to underrepresented groups; (2) make job modifications uniquely suited to the school level; and (3) alter the position to appeal to prospective applicants at all stages of their careers. (Contains 28 references.) (WFA)

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Strategies for Reinventing the Principalship

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Strategies for Reinventing the Principalship

Recruitment refers to all activities designed to obtain the number and quality of personnel needed to carry on the work of the school system (Castetter, 1996, p. 86). Recent trends have highlighted the importance of principal recruitment. Principals are retiring in record numbers, a high percentage of principals are opting for non-administrative positions, and classroom teachers are increasingly reluctant to fill the vacated positions (Barker, 1997; Doud & Keller, 1998; McAdams, 1998). Nationwide, superintendents report difficulty in filling vacant positions and the difficulty is predicted to intensify over the course of the next decade as increasing numbers of principals reach retirement age (Doud & Keller, 1998; Educational Research Service [ERS] and others, 1998).

Proposals for ameliorating the applicant shortage include providing principals with more realistic job descriptions (Adams, 1999; Anderson, 1991; ERS & others, 1998; Read, 2000). Although evidence exists that at least some school districts have begun to heed this call, it is unknown whether such alterations will appeal to more applicants because applicant reactions to features of principalship are subject to the individual differences among the prospective applicants (Schwab, Rynes & Aldag, 1987). The following sections provide a review of research highlighting factors that have been shown to influence applicant attraction for principalship and a brief overview of current efforts to redesign the principal's role.

Research Supporting Reinventing the Principalship

For most of the twentieth century, successful principals supervised teachers, managed the school, and attended to public relations (Cuban, 1988). Changes in society, the economy, and the political arena have compelled educational leaders to reconceptualize the principal's role. Today's principals are asked to develop a vision of learning, develop a school culture and

instructional program conducive to learning, manage the school, collaborate with community members, promote student learning by acting in an ethical manner, and respond to the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (Murphy & Shipman, 1999). In addition to these conceptualizations of principalship, state and local policy makers may further specify the principal's role. For example, in 1990 Kentucky state legislators required that all schools implement site-based decision making councils (Kentucky Education Reform, 1996). Researchers have begun to investigate how the emerging role demands have altered conditions of the educational.

Conditions of the Workplace

Compared to an average of 45 hours per week worked by principals decades ago, today's elementary principals average 50 hours each week and high school principals average between 60 and 80 hour each week (Doud & Keller, 1998; Read, 2000; Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998). Educational initiatives such as testing and accountability measures and local governance structures further increase the number of hours principals work. Because excessive time requirements reduce the number of individuals willing to seek the position and contribute to the high turnover rate, educational theorists have called on community leaders to retool the position.

Individual Differences

After reviewing more than two decades of private sector recruitment research, Rynes (1991) concluded that applicant reactions to job features are subject to the individual differences of the applicant. Similarly, there is general agreement in the educational recruitment literature that males and females respond to aspects of positions in educational administrative positions differently. A national sample of male superintendents indicated that responsibility, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships are the most important job factors whereas the female

superintendents reported that advancement and supervision are the most important job factors (Young, 1984). Furthermore, women are twice as likely as men to identify "overwhelming workload" as a major challenge facing principals (Kochan, Spencer & Matthews, 1999).

Teacher reactions to the duties of principals have also been shown to vary according to the job assignment level of the teacher (Winter & Dunaway, 1997). Elementary, middle, and high school teachers evaluated recruitment brochures manipulating demands of the principal's job (management, instructional leadership). The ratings of high school teachers were more favorable when the brochure emphasized management job attributes and the ratings of elementary and middle school teachers were more favorable when the brochure emphasized instructional leadership job attributes. Similarly, elementary and middle school teachers rated applicants for principal vacancies depicted as preferring instructional leadership more favorably whereas high school teachers rated applicants for principal vacancies depicted as preferring school management more favorably (Winter, McCabe & Newton, 1998).

The results of research examining the influence of job experience on educator reactions to position vacancies is mixed. For example, there was no difference in the reactions of experienced and inexperienced teachers to videotaped recruitment messages emphasizing categories of job attributes associated with a teaching position (Young, Rinehart, & Place, 1989). However, teacher reactions to simulated interviews varied by level of job experience with experienced teachers rating the job less favorably than experienced teachers (Young, Rinehart, & Heneman, 1993).

Emerging Models of the Principalship

Because of the increased demands placed on principals and the resulting undesirable conditions of the workplace, prospective applicants are increasingly reluctant to apply for

principal vacancies. To alleviate the job-related stress associated with the ever-expanding duties and responsibilities, national groups such as the Institute for Educational Leadership and the National Staff Development Council have called for providing mentors for principals, increasing incentives, increasing professional development, and creating apprenticeship programs. However, because the number of retiring principals and high turnover rate of current principals has reached critical proportions, some schools districts have given up on efforts that merely support principals. These districts have begun to develop new administrative models by breaking down the principal's duties and responsibilities into separate parts to be carried out by two or more individuals. The following section provides an overview of the emerging models of the principal's role.

The Co-Principal Model

Increasingly, schools and school districts are employing a model that houses two principals within the same high school. For example, in some California high schools, the co-principals have one principal assume responsibility for instructional leadership and the other for management-type activities such as the building and grounds. In other high schools, the co-principals divide the role with one principal assuming responsibility for instructional services and the other for student services. The instructional services principal is responsible for teaching, assessment and professional development whereas the student services principal is responsible for counseling, scheduling, and special education. Both principals share the budgeting, staffing, community relations, supervising, and evaluation duties. The assistant principal is in charge of the athletic program and graduation requirements. One advantage of the co-principal model is principals with differing strengths can do the jobs most suited for their areas of expertise.

The Principal/Business Manager Model

Another model for retooling the principal's role involves "splitting" the administrative functions into business management and instructional leadership. This model places a business manger in charge of administrative duties such as budget, cafeteria, busing, building and facility maintenance, purchasing, payroll, transportation, and management of non-instructional personnel while the principal retains responsibility for all instructional leadership roles. This model is currently employed in Britain and also in Texas where the Houston school board allows the school in question to decide weather to hire either an assistant principal or a district certified business manager. The business manager model is purported to enable school principals to concentrate more time on instructional leadership, to get to know the students better, to create a more visible presence, and, ultimately to reduce discipline problems (Ashford, 2000; Richard, 2000).

The Multi-Principal Model

The multi-principal high school model calls for a chief principal, a curriculum principal, and four grade-specific principals (Ashford, 2000). The chief principal is responsible for instructional leadership, community relations, staff development, custodial maintenance, teacher evaluations and other functions. The chief principal works closely with a curriculum principal and both work closely with and supervise the grade-specific principals principals. The multi-principal model allows for the chief principal to spend time focused on long-range plans, expanding the academic program, and working with teachers from each subject to share and compare best practices. The grade-level principals are assigned as principal of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors. These principals follow the students through each grade until graduation at which time they begin become principal for a new group of freshmen.

The Principal/Associate Principal Model

A model proposed by Millie Pierce of The Principal's Center at Harvard University calls for having a principal in charge of instructional leadership with an associate principal in charge of management issues such as transportation, cafeteria, purchasing, plant management, and parent concerns not related to teaching and learning. This model also calls for a budget director (Pierce, 2001a).

The Principal Teacher/ Principal Administrator Model

A second model proposed by Mille Pierce calls for a principal teacher and a principal administrator. The principal teacher has the authority to hire and fire but is also responsible for curriculum and technology and for student achievement. The principal administrator is responsible for plant management, transportation, food, secretaries and custodians, scheduling, data collection, parent involvement and is accountable to the principal teacher. The main goal of separating the responsibilities in this fashion is to increase student achievement by decreasing teacher isolation and providing more support for principals (Pierce, 2001b).

The Principal/Educational Specialist Model

The last of the models is in use district wide in one county in Alabama. This model eases the responsibilities of the building principal by providing an educational specialist whose role is to take over many of the instructional leadership duties focusing on improving instruction among teachers. An educational specialist is assigned to two schools alternating between the two on a daily basis. The building principal is responsible for scheduling, budgeting, managing material resources, providing professional development among other administrative duties. The educational specialist model allows building principals to focus on the day-to-day business of operating a school by releasing the principal from providing instructional leadership

Discussion

Our review of selected research findings and overview of emerging models for school administration invite discussion along two dimensions: (1) are the emerging models for reinventing principalship consistent with research findings? and (2) what are the practical implications for organizational representatives considering reinventing the principalship?

Research Findings and Emerging Models

As noted previously, the principal's role has become greatly expanded - overloaded in the opinion of many. It appears that the position has become unattractive to many individuals. Recent literature (Doud & Keller, 1998; Kochan, Spencer & Matthews, 1999; Read, 2000; Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998; ERS & others, 1998; Shakeshaft, 1989) suggests that the excessive number of hours to be worked greatly decreases attraction for the job. Furthermore, individual reactions to the job vary significantly in terms of gender, school level assignment, and job experience. Do the emerging models address these considerations?

Regarding the undesirable work conditions (i.e., excessively long hours), it seems intuitively reasonable to assume that, if the duties of the job are divided, then the individuals sharing the position will work fewer hours per week. Anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise. For example, one administrator stated that "We still work long, hard hours…the payoff is the collaboration and sense of team we share. It takes a great deal of deliberate communication with each other on a continual basis" (R. Hardie, personal communication, October 15, 2001). However, redesigning the principalship in ways that reduce the number of hours to be worked has implications for recruitment, particularly for females. As Kochan et al. (1999) have noted, women are twice as likely as men to identify "overwhelming workload" as a major challenge facing principals.

Redesigning the principalship in ways that take into consideration whether male and females adopt different leadership styles has implications for recruitment, too. Recent literature and discussions in the private sector and in the educational sector detected strong evidence that women tend to adopt a more democratic leadership style and men tend to adopt a more autocratic leadership style (Eagley & Johnson, 1990). From a recruitment perspective, whether a specified leadership style appeals to one gender more than another matters because, compared to their numbers in education, women continue to be underrepresented in administrative positions by 19% at the elementary level and 31% at the secondary level (Shakeshaft, 1999).

Recent research has detected differences to reactions to principalship attraction depending on school level. High school teachers who participated in a study rated applicants preferring to engage in school management more positively whereas elementary and middle school teachers rated applicants preferring to engage in instructional leadership more positively (Winter, McCabe & Newton, 1998). Finally, redesigning the principalship in ways that attract more experienced teachers has implications for recruitment. More experienced teachers tend to rate descriptions of teaching positions less positively than less experienced teachers (Young, Rinehart & Heneman, 1993).

Our examination of the emerging models of the principalship in light of the recruitment literature generated at least practical implications for organizational recruiters. From the recruitment literature we know that reactions to features of principalship are subject to individual differences such as gender. Consequently, features of the principalship that appeal to males may not appeal to females. In addition, features of principalship that appeal to elementary and middle school teachers may not appeal to high school teachers. Finally, features of the principalship that influence job attraction for aspiring principals and veteran principals may differ. To increase the

diversity of the applicant pool, organizational representatives should 1) consult studies examining the interaction between job features and applicant characteristics and modify the job in ways that appeal to underrepresented groups; 2) make job modifications uniquely suited to the school level; and 3) alter the position in ways that appeal to prospective applicants at all stages of their career.

Summary

In the future, researchers should evaluate the effectiveness of the emerging models in terms of recruitment. Such evaluation consists of responding to a series of questions. Do the emerging models improve conditions of the workplace in ways that are likely to attract more applicants? Do the emerging models improve conditions of the workplace enough to increase job retention and decrease the high turnover rate? Do the emerging models appeal to underrepresented groups (minorities, women)? Do the emerging models allow schools to provide the instructional leadership necessary to improve test scores? Do the emerging models allow principals more opportunity to conduct professional development and better teacher instruction?

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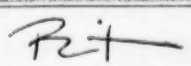
Signature: 	Printed Name/Position/Title: Peter Zeitoun	
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